

# Take It Beyond the Day

Increasing physical activity among children, teaching safe walking skills, easing traffic and improving the environment around schools can not be achieved in one day.

Many communities are using Walk to School Day to kick off long-term programs designed to bring about permanent changes. Here are some guidelines for these exciting programs.

## START A WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Many communities who want to make walking to school safer have started **walking school buses**. In a walking school bus, a small group of children walk to school together under the supervision of one or more adults.

### What You Will Need

- Volunteers to "drive" the bus
- Interested parents on key streets or buildings
- A regular pattern or schedule whereby a bus "operates"
- An outreach and information strategy to reach potential users



### Some tips for establishing a walking bus include:

- Arrange a meeting with the stakeholders. Include school administration, interested teachers parents and school volunteers. The purpose of such a meeting can be creating a common understanding of the purpose of a walking bus, and identifying individuals to take responsibility for starting a walking bus.
- Start small. Find a key street or apartment building where there is support for the project and build the idea from there.
- Identify areas where safety is a problem; Busy crossings, poor side walks, and unguarded streets are such places. These areas are ideal for walking buses.



## FREQUENT RIDER MILES

Children are issued tally cards to win points for walking, biking, carpooling and busing. Every time they walk or bike to school they earn two points. Every time they carpool or take the bus they earn one point. When they earn twenty points students turn in their card for a small prize, or another card. At the end of the contest, hold a raffle drawing of all the completed tally cards for major prizes. Contact local businesses and ask them to donate suitable prizes, such as sports equipment or bicycle gear, etc. In some areas, *Specialized Bicycles, Schwinn, Digger and Bell Helmets* have donated prizes including helmets, gloves, hats, T-shirts and even a new bike. Your State and Local Safety and Injury Prevention Programs may have helmets they could supply as prizes, also.

## FOOTSTEPS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

This is the brainchild of the "Way to Go" program in British Columbia. Provide each participating class with a piece of colored chalk, footstep stencil, and spray paint or chalk. Invite each person in the class to mark out his/her route to school using the materials supplied. Make sure you get permission from your local government if you are going to use any marking that will be permanent. A variation on this activity would be to mark the "Safe Routes" designated for your school in the same way.

## WALK AND BIKE ACROSS AMERICA



This activity allows students to get a broader perspective on the freedom provided by walking and biking. **Students keep track of the distance that they walk and bike to school** by calculating how far they live from school and multiplying that by the number of one-way biking and walking trips. If children are dropped off at staging areas near school they calculate the distance they travel from there. Similar counts are made from home to the bus stop.

Each week at a designated time, the students add up the distance that the whole class traveled during that week and plot it on a map. Then they "travel" to a destination chosen by the class within those miles. Students become aware that they can travel great distances on foot or by bike. As your class continues to accumulate miles, the class can research new destinations around the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special reward, such as a video or pizza party. Classes could track their miles on [www.utahwalks.org](http://www.utahwalks.org).



In a variation on this contest, you can include carpools and bus passengers by adding bonus miles for every child who uses those modes. Note that students using motorized transportation can travel farther than those going on their own power. To include the actual miles would defeat the purpose of the exercise. Add one mile to the class total for every child who carpools or rides the bus to school.

## BUT OUR STUDENTS RIDE THE BUS...

**Here are some suggestions that will help you include these students in your activities:**

1. Arrange for buses to drop students at a location that is away from the schoolgrounds...a nearby church or business parking lot...which is along one of your Safe Routes to School. Be sure to have help there to send your walkers in the right direction.
2. Set up a walking trail around the periphery of the schoolgrounds. As students exit the bus, direct them to the trail for their few minutes of good physical activity before school.
3. Many schools have set up Gold Medal Mile courses. This would be a good time to revisit your course. Challenge students and parents to "walk the mile" before school starts on Walk to School Day.
4. Be sure to encourage students and parents to walk to and from the bus stop. Safe Routes to the Bus stop are important too.

